

Week Ending Friday, August 22, 2008

The President's Radio Address

August 15, 2008

Good morning. For more than a week, the people of the nation of Georgia have withstood assault from the Russian military. The world has watched with alarm as Russia invaded a sovereign, neighboring state and threatened a democratic government elected by its people. This act is completely unacceptable to the free nations of the world.

The United States and our allies stand with the people of Georgia and their democratically elected Government. We insist that Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity be respected. And Moscow must honor its pledge to withdraw its invading forces from all Georgian territory.

Earlier this week, I directed a series of steps to demonstrate America's solidarity with the Georgian people and to help bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict. On Thursday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was in France, where she conferred with President Sarkozy about the diplomatic effort that the French Government is leading on behalf of the European Union.

Yesterday she was in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, where she conveyed America's support for Georgia's democratic Government. And next week, Secretary Rice will travel to Brussels, where she will meet with the foreign ministers of our NATO allies and EU officials to continue our efforts to rally the free world in defense of a free Georgia.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates is overseeing a mission by the United States military to provide humanitarian aid for the people of Georgia. In recent days, U.S. cargo planes carrying humanitarian supplies have arrived in Georgia. In the days ahead, we will continue using U.S. aircraft and other assets as needed to deliver more humanitarian and medical supplies. Russia has agreed to let in all forms of humanitarian assistance, and Russia must keep open all lines of commu-

nication and transport, including seaports, airports, roads, and airspace for civilian transit and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Some Americans listening today may wonder why events taking place in a small country halfway around the world matter to the United States. In the years since it gained independence after the Soviet Union's collapse, Georgia has become a courageous democracy whose people are making the tough choices that are required of free societies.

Since the Rose Revolution in 2003, the Georgian people have held free elections, opened up their economy, and built the foundations of a successful democracy. Georgia has sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq to help others achieve the liberty that they struggled so hard to attain. To further strengthen their democracy, Georgia has sought to join the free institutions of the West. The people of Georgia have cast their lot with the free world, and we will not cast them aside.

Georgia's emergence as a young democracy has been part of an inspiring and hopeful new chapter in Europe's history. Europe has moved beyond the world wars that killed millions of people and the cold war that divided its citizens between two superpowers. For the first time in memory, Europe is becoming a continent that is whole, free, and at peace. And it is essential that America and other free nations ensure that an embattled democracy seeking to stand with us remains sovereign, secure, and undivided.

Russia's actions in Georgia raise serious questions about its role and its intentions in the Europe of the 21st century. In recent years, Russia has sought to integrate into the diplomatic, political, economic, and security structures of the West. The United States has supported those efforts. Now, Russia has put its aspirations at risk by taking actions in Georgia that are inconsistent with the principles of those institutions.

To begin to repair the damage to its relations with the United States, Europe, and other nations and to begin restoring its place in the world, Russia must act to end this crisis.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 a.m. on August 15 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 16. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 15. In his address, the President referred to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Crawford, Texas

August 16, 2008

Situation in Georgia

Good morning. I just had a briefing by my national security team on the latest updates—on the latest developments in Georgia, and there is some progress to report.

First of all, I want to thank Secretary of State Rice for her trip, and thank you for coming back here to Crawford to give me a firsthand briefing.

She went to Tbilisi, met with President Saakashvili and his team. And during that time, the President signed the six-point peace plan negotiated by President Sarkozy on behalf of the European Union. President Medvedev of Russia has now signed on to the terms of this agreement. And that's an important development; it's a hopeful step.

Now, Russia needs to honor the agreement and withdraw its forces, and of course, end military operations.

Secretary Rice will soon travel to Brussels, where she will meet with the foreign ministers of our NATO allies and EU officials to continue to rally the free world in the defense of a free Georgia.

This morning, also, I was briefed by Secretary Gates on the U.S. military's humani-

tarian mission to help the Georgian people recover from the trauma they have suffered. In recent days, military flights have landed in Georgia to provide relief supplies, and more will be arriving in the days ahead.

A major issue is Russia's contention that the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia may not be a part of Georgia's future. But these regions are a part of Georgia, and the international community has repeatedly made clear that they will remain so. Georgia is a member of the United Nations, and South Ossetia and Abkhazia lie within its internationally recognized borders. Georgia's borders should command the same respect as every other nation's.

There's no room for debate on this matter. The United Nations Security Council has adopted numerous resolutions concerning Georgia. These resolutions are based on the premise that South Ossetia and Abkhazia remain within the borders of Georgia and that their underlying conflicts will be resolved through international negotiations. These resolutions are based on the premise that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are to be considered a part of the Georgian territory, and that to the extent that there's conflicts, they will be resolved peacefully.

These resolutions reaffirm Georgia's sovereignty and independence and territorial integrity. Russia itself has endorsed these resolutions. The international community is clear that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are part of Georgia, and the United States fully recognizes this reality.

We will continue to stand behind Georgia's democracy; we will continue to insist that Georgia's sovereignty and independence and territorial integrity be respected.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia; and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council.